

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- SUB A17
1. An image distributing system for distributing an image having a target character, comprising:
 - a camera system for capturing images;
 - an image database connecting with said camera system to receive image data and storing the image data;
 - a character information database storing character information for identifying a target character; and
 - an image collecting unit for identifying the target character, in the image data stored in said image database, and for collecting images having the target character.
 2. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a signal transmitter for transmitting image data from said camera system to said image database.
 3. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an image selecting terminal showing the images collected by said image collecting unit to a user and prompting the user to select images.
 4. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 3, wherein said image selecting terminal includes means for capturing an image of the user who is to select images.
 5. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 4, wherein said image selecting terminal further includes means for verifying the user who is to select images based on the character information stored in said character information database.
 6. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 3, wherein said image selecting terminal distributes the image data of said images selected by the user.
 7. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, further

comprising an outputting unit outputting the image data of said images collected by said image collecting unit.

8. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said outputting unit distributes the outputted image data.

9. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 7, further comprising an image selecting terminal showing images collected by said image collecting unit to a user and prompting the user to select images from said collected images,

wherein said image selecting terminal transmits to said outputting unit image selection information representing which images are selected by the user.

10. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said outputting unit includes at least one of a printer, a CD-R recorder, an MD recorder, a web server for distributing the collected images via the Internet, means for sending E-mail with the collected images attached.

11. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the character information stored in said character information database includes data about at least one of a facial characteristic, body characteristic, and characteristic of wearing apparel of the target character.

12. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said camera system includes a plurality of cameras located within a predetermined area.

13. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said image collecting unit identifies a plurality of characters in said image data based on character information corresponding to each of the plurality of characters.

14. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, further

comprising a character information obtaining unit for importing an image of the target character to said character information database as the character information of the target character.

15. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 14, wherein:
said character information obtaining unit has a plurality of cameras for capturing character information,

said character information obtaining unit imports a plurality of images of the target character captured from a plurality of different angles by a respective one of said plurality of cameras, and

said image collecting unit identifies and collects, based on the plurality of images captured from the plurality of angles, said images having the target character stored in said image database.

16. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 14, wherein said character information obtaining unit updates previously obtained character information with newly obtained character information for the target character.

17. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein:
said character information database stores a registration of data of refusal to be imaged by a person, and

said image collecting unit does not collect images when at least one character in an image is a person who refuses to be imaged.

18. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said camera system includes at least one camera that is movable and said mobile camera has a wireless transmitter.

19. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 18, wherein said mobile camera is installed in a mobile facility, which is an object for attracting attention of the target character.

20. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a character identifying unit for identifying the target

character in a plurality of images,

wherein when a character is identified in one of the plurality of images as the target character, said character identifying unit also identifies the same character in the rest of the plurality of images as the target character.

21. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said camera system includes a plurality of cameras located within a predetermined area.

22. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 20, wherein: said camera system includes a camera group including a plurality of cameras, each camera of said plurality of cameras captures an image of a character such that the character is imaged from a plurality of different angles by said plurality of cameras, and

wherein when the character in an image captured by one of said plurality of cameras in said camera group is identified as the target character, said character identifying unit identifies the same character in other images captured by other of said plurality of cameras in said camera group as the target character.

23. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 20, wherein said camera system includes a camera group including a plurality of cameras, each camera of said plurality of cameras captures an image of a character such that the character is imaged at a plurality of different time periods by said plurality of cameras, and

wherein when the character in an image captured by one of said plurality of cameras in said camera group is identified as the target character, said character identifying unit identifies the same character in other images captured by other of said plurality of cameras in said camera group as the target character.

24. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said image collecting unit identifies the target character substantially at the time an image with the target character is captured by said camera system.

25. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 24, wherein said image collecting unit saves only image data with the target character to said image database.

26. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein: when said image collecting unit identifies the target character as a person who refuses to be imaged substantially at the time an image is captured by said camera system and when at least one person in said image is identified as the target character who refuses to be imaged, said image collecting unit does not collect images with the target character who refuses to be imaged.

27. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a timing detecting unit for detecting a timing to capture an image with the target character,

wherein said camera system captures said image with the target character when said timing detecting unit detects said timing for capturing said image.

28. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 27, wherein said timing detecting unit detects, based on position information about a plurality of characters, said timing for capturing an image when said plurality of characters are at a predetermined position.

29. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 27, further comprising means for prompting a person in a predetermined area to carry a transmitter for transmitting radio waves,

wherein said timing detecting unit includes a receiver for receiving the radio waves, and said timing detecting unit determines a distance between said transmitter and said receiver based on the radio waves transmitted from said transmitter, and detects said timing for capturing an image when the distance is determined to be a predetermined distance.

30. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 29, wherein

said transmitter includes one of an ID card and a cellular phone.

31. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 29, wherein the radio waves transmitted and received between said transmitter and said receiver include the character information.

32. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 29, wherein said image collecting unit identifies the target character substantially at the time when an image is captured by said camera system.

33. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 29, wherein said means for prompting a person prompts a person who refuses to be imaged to carry a transmitter.

34. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 33, wherein when said image collecting unit identifies the target character as a person who refuses to be imaged substantially at the time an image is captured by said camera system, and when at least one person in said image is identified as the target character who refuses to be imaged, said image collecting unit does not collect images with the target character who refuses to be imaged.

35. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 29, wherein at least one of the radio waves transmitted and received between said transmitter and said receiver is a directional radio wave.

36. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 27, wherein said timing detecting unit detects a position of the target character and a position of an object for attracting attention of the target character.

37. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 27, wherein said timing detecting unit detects that both the target character and an object for attracting attention of the target character are in a predetermined range to be captured in an image.

38. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said camera system transmits the image data to said image database substantially every time an image is captured.

39. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said camera system transmits the image data to said image database substantially at predetermined time intervals.

40. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said camera system transmits the image data to said image database when a predetermined number of images are stored in the camera system.

41. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said camera system transmits the image data to said image database upon at least one of a predetermined number of images being stored and a predetermined time interval having elapsed.

42. The image distributing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the system is structured and arranged in an amusement park.

43. A method for distributing an image having a target character, comprising the steps of:

- (a) registering character information for the target character;
- (b) capturing images having the target character;
- (c) storing image data of the captured images;
- (d) identifying the target character in each of the images based on the character information; and
- (e) collecting images having the target character from the stored image data.

44. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising the step of outputting image data of collected images having the target character.

45. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising the step of distributing image data of collected images having the target character.

46. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising the steps of:

showing a plurality of collected images having the target character to a user;

prompting the user to select an image the user wants distributed; and

directing the user to input information as to which images are to be distributed.

47. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 46, further comprising the step of distributing image data of images selected by the user for distribution.

48. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 46, further comprising a step of limiting the user to selecting images having the user as the target character based on the character information.

49. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 48, wherein the step of limiting the user includes verifying that the user who selects an image is the target character based on the character information.

50. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 46, further comprising steps of:

outputting collected images having the target character, and notifying that image data for selected images is outputted.

51. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of registering character information includes a step of importing an image of the target character for the character information.

52. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 51, wherein said step of registering character information includes a step of importing a plurality of images of the target character, said plurality of images comprising images from a plurality of angles which are different from one another, wherein

said step of identifying the target character identifies the target character based on the plurality of images imported as the character information of the target character.

53. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of registering character information registers data about at least one of a facial characteristic, body characteristic, and characteristic of wearing apparel for the target character.

54. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 53, wherein said step of registering character information includes steps of:

obtaining an image of the target character, said image having at least one of the face, body, and wearing apparel of the target character; and

storing data about at least one of a facial characteristic, body characteristic, and wearing apparel characteristic for the target character as the character information.

55. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of registering character information includes a step of updating the character information for the target character when new character information is obtained.

56. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein:

said step of registering character information includes registering in a character information database a refusal of a person who refuses to be imaged,

said step of identifying identifies the target character as

a person who refuses to be imaged based up on said registration of the refusal, and

said step of collecting does not collect images having at least one person who refuses to be imaged.

57. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of capturing images captures images using a camera system, and the camera system includes a plurality of cameras located within a predetermined area.

58. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of capturing images captures images using a mobile camera, further comprising a step of transmitting images from the mobile camera by wireless means.

59. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 58, further comprising the step of installing the mobile camera on an object for attracting attention of the target character, wherein said step of capturing images captures images from the object for attracting attention.

60. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein when a person is caught in a plurality of images, and when said step of identifying the target character identifies a person as the target character in one of the plurality of images, said step of identifying also identifies the person in the other of the plurality of images as the target character.

61. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 60, wherein said step of capturing images captures a plurality of images from a plurality of cameras located within a predetermined area.

62. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 61, further comprising a step of providing a camera group having a plurality of cameras, wherein said step of capturing images includes capturing by

each camera in the plurality of cameras an image of a character such that the character is imaged from a plurality of different angles, wherein when the character in one of the plurality of images is identified as the target character, said step of identifying the target character identifies the same character in other images captured by said plurality of cameras in the camera group as the target character.

63. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 61, further comprising the step of providing a camera group having a plurality of cameras,

wherein said step of capturing images includes capturing by each camera in the plurality of cameras an image of a character such that the character is imaged at a plurality of different time periods, and

wherein when the character in one of the plurality of images is identified as the target character, said step of identifying the target character identifies the same character in other images captured by said plurality of cameras in the camera group as the target character.

64. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of identifying the target character identifies a person caught in an image as the target character substantially at the time when the image is captured.

65. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 64, wherein said step of collecting images comprises a step of saving only image data having the target character.

66. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 64, wherein:

said step of registering character information includes registering a refusal of a person who refuses to be imaged,

said step of identifying a target character includes identifying the target character in an image as the person who refuses

to be imaged substantially at the time when the image is captured,
and

when said step of identifying a target character identifies at least one person in the image as the person who refuses to be imaged, said step of collecting images does not collect said image having at least one person who refuses to be imaged.

67. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein said step of identifying a target character identifies a plurality of characters in an image based on character information corresponding to each of the plurality of characters.

68. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a step of detecting a timing for said step of capturing images, wherein said step of capturing images captures the images when the timing is detected.

69. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 68, wherein said step of detecting a timing includes a step of locating a position of the target character based on position information of the target character, wherein

when said step of locating a position locates the target character at a predetermined position, said step of detecting a timing detects the timing for capturing images.

70. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 69, further comprising the step of transmitting radio waves from the target character, wherein said step of detecting a timing includes receiving the radio waves, and wherein said step of locating a position includes calculating a distance between a camera system for capturing images and the target character based on the radio waves transmitted and received, and said step of capturing images captures an image when the calculated distance between the camera system and the target character is a predetermined distance.

71. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 68,

wherein said step of detecting a timing includes locating a position of the target character and a position of a predetermined object to be captured in an image, wherein said step of capturing images captures an image when both the target character and the predetermined object are located within a predetermined area.

72. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a step of transmitting image data captured at said step of capturing images to be stored substantially at the time an image is captured.

73. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a step of transmitting image data captured at said step of capturing images to be stored at predetermined time intervals.

74. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a step of transmitting image data captured at said step of capturing images to be stored when a predetermined number of images are captured.

75. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a step of transmitting image data captured at said step of capturing images to be stored upon at least one of a predetermined number of images being stored in a camera system for capturing the images and a predetermined time interval having elapsed.

76. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, further comprising a step of outputting image data comprising at least one of printing images on paper, recording images on a CD-R, recording images on an MD, distributing images at a predetermined URL, and sending E-mail with images attached thereto.

77. The method for distributing an image as claimed in claim 43, wherein the methods take place in an amusement park.

78. A business method for distributing an image having a target character, comprising the steps of:

- (a) registering character information for the target character;
- (b) capturing images in which a person who is the target character is caught;
- (c) storing image data of the captured images;
- (d) collecting image data of said images in which the target character is caught from the stored image data based on the registered character information;
- (e) prompting a user to select an image with the target character to be distributed from the collected images; and
- (f) distributing the selected image in which the target character is caught based on information about the selected image.

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